



Country programme workplan in the Kyrgyz Republic

April 2018

Total budget requested

US\$ 800,000

Beneficiaries to be reached with this contribution

Total direct beneficiaries from the beginning of the JP - 7,456, (6,480 women and 976 men) including:

- 2,731 (2,710 women and 21 men) directly
- 3064 people (2443 women, 621 men), through GALS/HHM

27,738 indirect beneficiaries (14,179 women and 13,559 men)

700 new beneficiaries in 2018-2019: 670 women and 30 men

Duration of project:

1 July 2018 – 30 September 2019

1. Background Information

Context

The Kyrgyz Republic is a landlocked mountainous country in Central Asia with a population of 6 million people. The vast majority of the population (65%) resides in rural areas. Kyrgyzstan's Human Development Index in 2015 has placed it 120th of 188 with a value of 0.664¹. About a third of the population lives below poverty line, and poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon: 67.7% of all poor and 70.5% of all in extreme poverty live in rural areas. There is a growing gender gap in labour force participation, from 16% in 1990 to 27% in 2016.²

General lack of job opportunities in rural areas, coupled with lower level of education attainment among young rural women, in an environment of a growing influence of traditional stereotypes, confines them in the limits of their households. Share of women in the category of contributing family workers is increasing, which means rural women increasingly provide free labour on family farms, instead of engaging in paid employment. Rural women, especially young rural women, shoulder most of the unpaid reproductive duties in the households. They spend 2.6 times more time on domestic work, educating children, and helping relatives, than rural men³.

Limited access to basic utilities in rural areas, such as water supply, sewage, telephone, electricity and gas supply, particularly among poor households, further increases the burden of reproductive duties on women's shoulders.

¹ UNDP Human Development Report 2015.

² ibid

³ Men and women of Kyrgyz Republic 2015.

Finally, migration outflows of women and men from rural areas continue to put strain on the care economy depriving the old population and children of care in the absence of government-funded care services and infrastructure. This situation leads to further erosion of human capital and will have a long-term effect on the care economy of the country.

The fact that the poor households are characterized by lower stock of assets, including human capital, higher number of dependents, and higher reliance on natural resources, makes the rural poor more exposed and less resilient to economic, environmental and other shocks⁴.

The preparation of this Work Plan has coincided with an intensive process of localization of SDGs in Kyrgyzstan, and developing a strategy on SDGs 2030, as well as of a Roadmap to sustainable development 2040. The UN system's new UNDAF for 2018-2022 has been endorsed by the Government in May 2017. The proposed project is aligned with its priority theme 1 on Inclusive and sustainable economic growth, where rural women's economic empowerment is one of the strategies of the UN, as well as the other three priorities by improving rural women's access to decision-making and local governance (Priority 2); improving their resilience to disaster and climate change induced risks (Priority 3); and better access to social services (Priority 4)⁵.

The programme has been designed as a 5-year initiative with a total budget of 5 million USD for 2012-2017. The first allocation was received in 2014 from the Government of Norway followed by a funding from SIDA in 2015 through end 2017. With the confirmed funding of 800,000 USD for June 2018 – September 2019 the Program intends to replicate and upscale the best practices gained over the period of three years.

Rationale

To provide a coordinated and coherent response to multidimensional challenges faced by rural women, in 2012 UN Women joined with the World Food Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agriculture Development to launch a global Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE).

The partnership of four UN agencies has allowed for a multi-dimensional and mutually reinforcing approach to economic empowerment of rural women using their comparative advantage and expertise: FAO's technical assistance on agricultural technology and extension support; IFAD's experience in innovative approaches for M&E and household development; WFP's food assistance and nutrition interventions and value chain development; and UN Women's technical expertise on women's economic empowerment, and its policy work for gender-responsive environment.

Design of the JP interventions was informed by USAID-funded Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index survey in 2014, which served as a baseline, and provided information across five empowerment dimensions: production, resources, income, leadership, and time. Rural women in Kyrgyzstan have reported the highest disempowerment rates across the following areas: income (access to decisions on credit – 34.8%), leadership (group membership – 30.8%, speaking in public – 9.7%), time (workload – 19%), production (ownership of assets – 13.5%). Accordingly, the JP interventions have focused on providing access to affordable starting capital in their communities through establishment of Revolving Funds; to work through women's self-help groups and strengthen women's activism at the community level, as well as public speaking skills for candidates to local councils; to use household methodologies for joint planning and negotiation of fairer distribution of care work within households; and building skills for running income-generating activities, and provision of high quality inputs for increased agricultural productivity.

The proposed strategy builds on the implementation of JP RWEE in 2014-2017 integrating lessons learnt, best practices from Kyrgyzstan and other JP RWEE countries, and aligning with the changes in the national policy framework. It is proposed to upscale coverage of the JP and include 700 new beneficiaries (670 women and 30

⁴ World Bank Systematic Country Diagnostic Kyrgyz Republic 2017

⁵ United Nations Development Assistance Framework in the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2022

men); to replicate the models of providing on-farm and off-farm productive employment opportunities, through climate resilience technologies, increasing rural women's participation in local development planning, and strengthen policy support at the macroeconomic level to better integrate measures to empower rural women in national policy documents.

The Programme targets the vulnerable rural women identified through participatory poverty pyramid methodology,⁶ living beyond the national poverty line. A special focus will be given to female-headed households, young rural women, women who have disabled children, and other women facing multiple forms of discrimination.

As concluded by the Program Evaluation,⁷ the JP RWEE design had an explicit focus of alignment with national strategic documents in the areas of gender equality, agriculture, food security and sustainable development. JP RWEE is also well aligned with the Agenda 2030: the programme contributes towards implementation of 10 targets under 7 SDGs. The JP RWEE design and results are well-aligned with the needs of its target beneficiaries, rural women. The programme component that is most valued by rural women is agricultural training delivered by professionals. The Evaluation also noted the barriers preventing women to participate and benefit from the JP RWEE. In the next phase the Programme is to reconsider selection criterion to make them more inclusive with an aim to target the poor who were left behind by the previous phase (those potential beneficiaries who do not have enough land, are not able to work on the land due to disability or have to take care of small children and children with disability, etc). Another lesson learnt from the Evaluation was that women reported they had less time for leisure since involvement in income generating activities. The rollout of the GALs will provide an opportunity to further explore the affecting factors and address them.

Results achieved

The JP RWEE is being implemented in Kyrgyzstan in 73 villages across five provinces: Osh, Jalabad, Batken, Chuy and Naryn. The Programme to date has directly assisted 2,731 women and men, indirectly improving livelihoods of 27,738 (14,179 women and 13,559 men)⁸ rural residents, family members of the Programme participants. Some of the main results achieved so far include:

- 2,712 women in 45 villages are engaged in productive and sustainable agriculture with productivity increase of 30-70%, average additional income of 488 USD per agricultural season. Of them 805 women are running small businesses achieving an average of 29.5% increase in income. This is expected to improve livelihoods of rural women, increasing their resilience to food and economic crises, and invest in the health and education of their family members;
- 125 new self-help groups with 1,000 women, have been established in 28 villages, thus reaching a total of 379 self-help groups, 73 community funds in 45 villages, with total savings fund over 1,5 mln KGS (approx. US\$21,900); two women's cooperatives and two women's associations established, and started providing services to at least 1,500 women-members to access inputs, extension support, finance from its revolving capital, information, and joint marketing. These organizations will allow for joint procurement of inputs, joint processing of the produce and better negotiation power with value chain actors. Cumulative revolving capital of the four organizations is over 107,000 USD, which is used for funding self-help group based business initiatives of rural women;
- 63% reduction of share of households with 'poor' or 'borderline' Food Consumption Score, and Dietary

⁶ Participatory poverty pyramid methodology is one of the instruments of the Participatory Rural Appraisal to select the target group in a community. It allows identification of the poor based on jointly agreed specific criterion for a particular community.

⁷ A final evaluation of the JP RWEE was conducted in early 2018 with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation was to assess in more detail the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability.

⁸ The data from the Programme 2017 Annual Report.